

**Health Professional
Fact Sheet and Maps**

AUGUST 2004

Suspected Former Lead Smelter Sites: A Potential Risk Factor for Childhood Lead Poisoning

Background

The Pennsylvania Department of Health (DOH) and the federal Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) have mapped 53 suspected former lead smelter foundries that operated in the commonwealth of Pennsylvania primarily before 1964 and closed prior to today's strict environmental standards.* Air deposition from the former operations may have contaminated the soil or dust in surrounding neighborhoods and thereby present a potential current public health risk for childhood lead poisoning.

Former lead smelter sites nationwide were identified in an April 2001 article published in the American Journal of Public Health by Eckel, et al¹. Soil samples taken from 9 of 10 of these sites in this study exceeded the residential standards for lead in soil. The extent

of off-site contamination from these sites may vary greatly because of the type and extent of former facility operations, as well as atmospheric conditions that are unique to each location. In addition, changes in landscape over the years and current land use will have a significant effect on the risk of lead exposure from past contamination. The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) are investigating the sites in Pennsylvania to determine past and current use and will be completing a individual summary report on each site. Presently, the DOH and ATSDR feel it is a prudent public health action for you to consider blood lead screening for children under six who live near these sites.

Recommendations

- The purpose of this fact sheet is to assist you in identifying children in your practice who may be at risk for elevated blood lead levels because they live near a former lead smelter site. Consider doing a blood lead test on children under six in your practice who live near these sites.
- Air deposition of lead from former smelter operations may be a health concern to nearby neighborhoods; either independently or more likely as an additive contributor to other common sources of lead in the home or environment. Since most facilities operated decades ago, residents living nearby may not be aware of a potential health risk.
- Elevated blood lead levels can damage the nervous system, kidneys, and reproductive system. Young children and pregnant women are especially vulnerable to adverse health effects. Recent research indicates that blood lead is harmful at low levels previously thought to be safe.

Resources and Reference

- **Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry**
ToxFAQs™ for Lead: <http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/tfacts13.html>
Lora Siegmman-Werner, MPH at (215) 814-3141 or lkw9@cdc.gov
- **Pennsylvania Department of Health**
Lead Information Line 1-800-440-LEAD
Barbara Allerton, MPH, RN at (717) 787-3350 or ballerton@pa.gov
- **The Mid-Atlantic Center for Children's Health and the Environment**
1-866-622-2431 or www.health-e-kids.org
- **The Environmental Protection Agency**
www.epa.gov/opptintr/lead/nlic.htm or 1-800-424-LEAD
John Rajkowski at (215) 814-3160 or Rajkowski.John@epa.gov
- **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**
www.cdc.gov/health/lead.htm

¹ Eckel, William P., M.S., Rabinowitz, Michael B. PhD, and Foster, Gregory D., PhD (April 2001). Discovering Unrecognized Lead-Smelting Sites by Historical Methods, American Journal of Public Health, 91, (4), 625-627.

* This list was designed to identify obscure smelters; smelters currently operating or under remediation may not be listed.

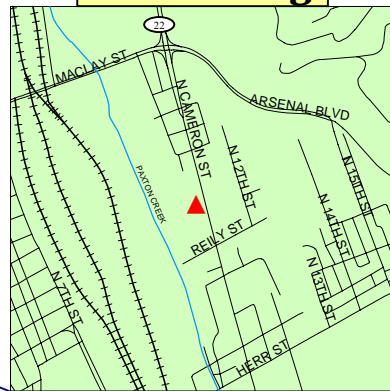
Suspected Former Lead Smelter Sites in Pennsylvania

Separate Maps for Allegheny and Philadelphia Counties*

Erie Area



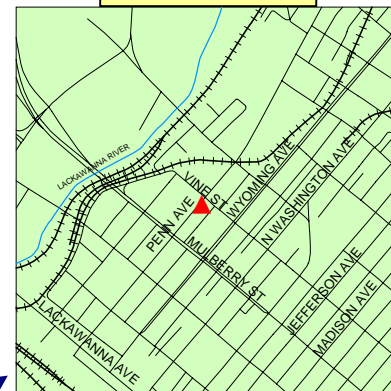
Harrisburg



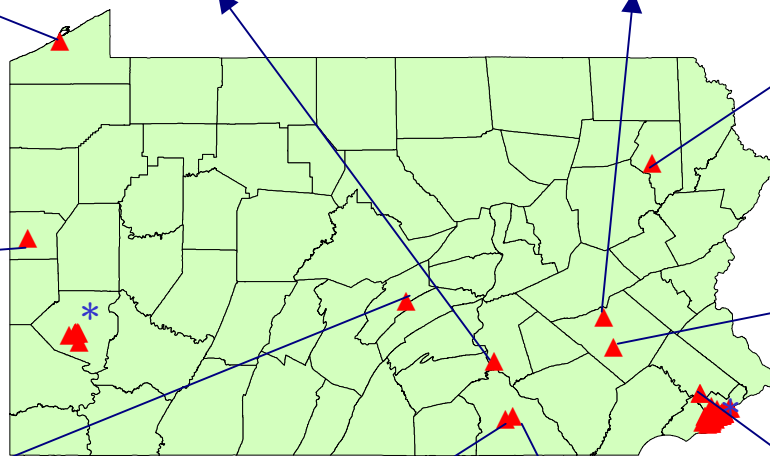
Hamburg



Scranton



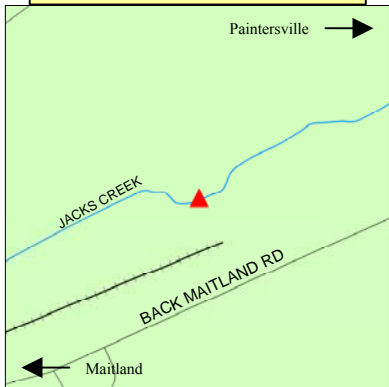
New Castle



Reading Area



Lewistown Area



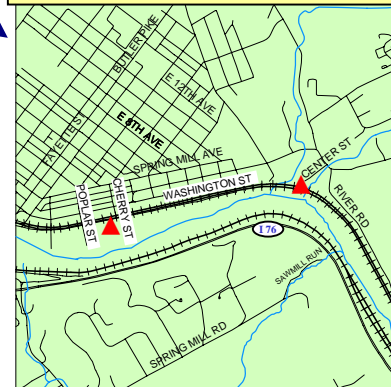
York (west)



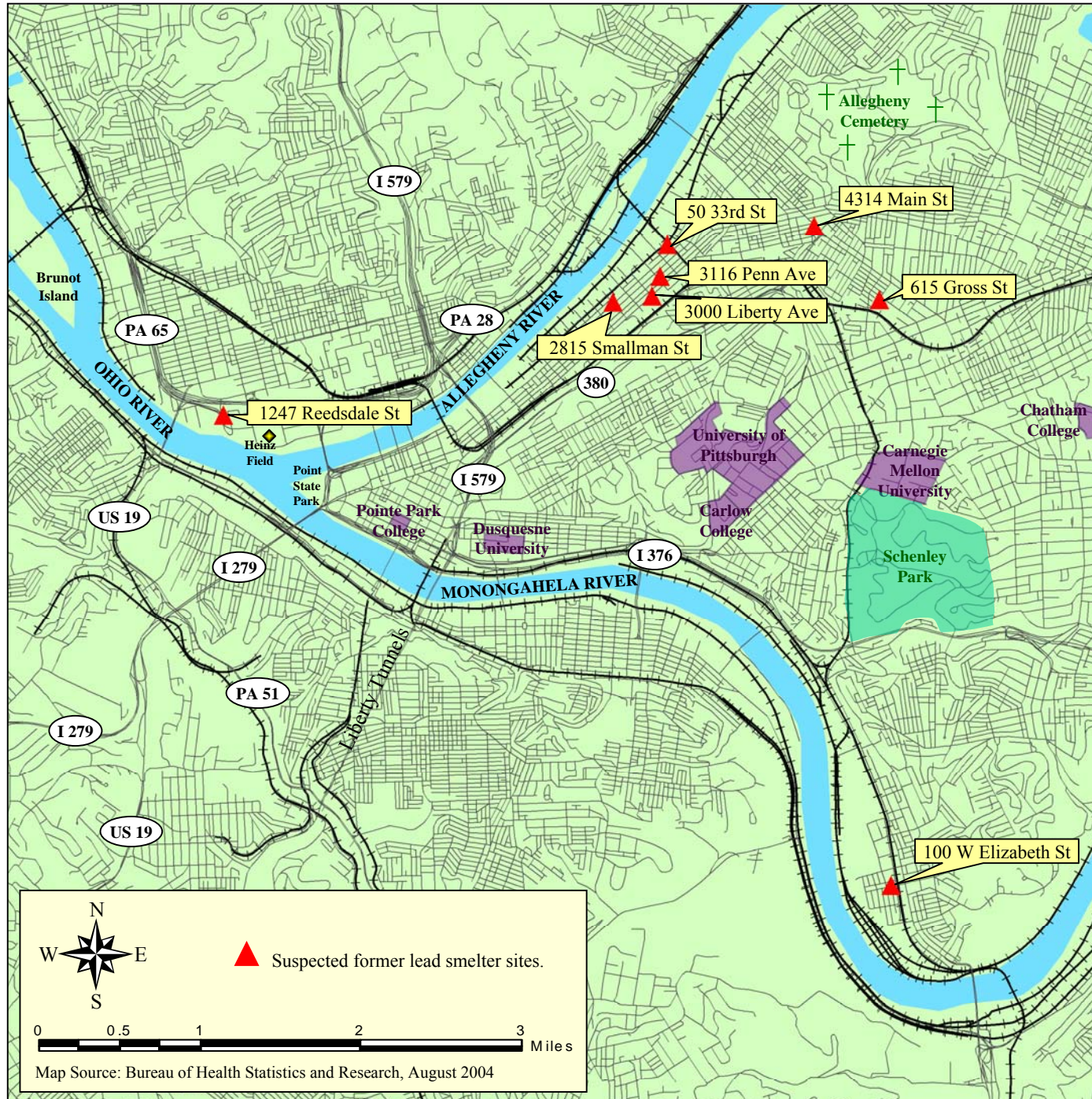
York (east)



Conshohocken Area



Suspected Former Lead Smelter Sites in Allegheny County



Suspected Former Lead Smelter Sites in Philadelphia County

